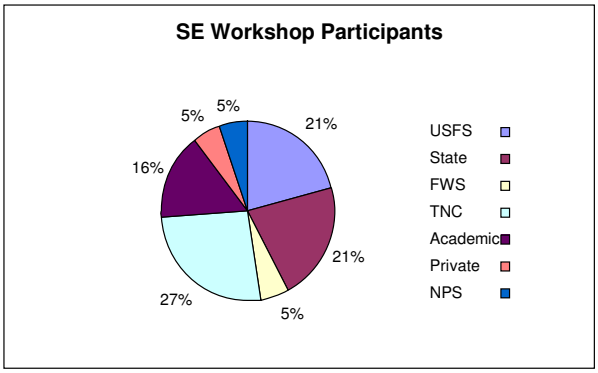
LANDFIRE

LESSONS LEARNED: Issue 9

Modeling in the Southeast: Collaboration in the Nation's Fire Management Capital

Over twenty ecologists and fire managers from the USFS, FWS, NPS, South Carolina Forestry Commission, Florida Division of Forestry, University of North Carolina, North Carolina State, Duke University, and TNC met in Tallahassee, Florida, March 7-11, 2005, to collaboratively develop 24 quantitative ecological models for major potential natural vegetation types found throughout the southeastern U.S. In contrast to workshops held in the western U.S., participation was dominated by non-federal land managers, reflecting a fundamental difference in the nature of fire management between the eastern and western U.S.



Despite the challenges faced by southeastern fire managers (e.g., fragmented ecosystems, a long history of Euro-American settlement and relatively greater uncertainty in pre-settlement ecosystem conditions), the demand for models of reference conditions for the purposes of land and fire management is just as great. These ecological models will provide estimates of expected ecosystem characteristics and structure under native disturbance regimes including succession, fire, weather stresses, and pathogens. Once the models have been peer reviewed, they will be used to map Fire Regime Condition Class in the LANDFIRE Rapid Assessment. The models will also be available to land managers and planners for a variety of other uses including identifying desired future conditions, fire management planning, developing and evaluating alternative restoration strategies, and further refinement for other site specific needs.

Next steps in the southeast include completing peer review of the models developed in this workshop, initiating LANDFIRE application sites in the southeast, and gearing up to further refine the models for the national LANDFIRE project.

Lessons Learned in the SE

- Reviewing the initial list of PNVG models prior to modeling workshops helps participants become familiar with the PNVG concept, and has helped them determine how it relates to their own vegetation classifications.
- Diversity is the key, in modelers that is. The SE has a long-term history of fire management and the repository of knowledge is in many places. Involving a diversity of individuals, public and private, local, state, and national, is vital to developing more robust models.
- The workshop provided a good avenue to increase knowledge and understanding of LANDFIRE, particularly among local, state, and private partners.

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